

than years of his own creations. So I believe, the only way to restore architecture to the unfettered state in which it was in its "palmy days," is not only to study well, but also to copy, the works of the ancient architects from the beginning, as has been the wisdom of the societies at our two universities to encourage. The result of this course will prove, whether architecture as a Fine Art really is worn out.—I am, Sir, &c.

Bloomsbury, 12th July, 1846. T. M. W.

#### COMPLETION OF THE BOOKSELLERS' PROVIDENT RETREAT.

On Tuesday last the retreat erected by the Booksellers' Provident Institution for infirm and decayed members, at Abbot's Langley, Herts, was formally opened, and a breakfast afterwards given in celebration of the event, whereat Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton presided. The Retreat is pleasantly situated adjoining the Birmingham railway, so that by means of a special train about 200 persons were conveyed to the spot, and brought back again in the evening, without fatigue.

The structure, as at present erected under the direction of Mr. W. H. Cooper, consists of seven houses of four rooms each; the centre house projects, and (the rooms being larger) affords accommodation for general meetings of the inmates or the committee. The style is Tudor; the materials used Anston stone and red bricks. Porches to the doors; mullions and labels to the windows; a gable in the centre, at each end, and on each return; and angular buttresses, terminating in small octagonal shafts with ogee caps, form the staple of the design, and demand no particular comment.

Mr. W. Trego was the builder, and the whole cost was about 3,000*l*. The work appears to be well and soundly done; we must, however, take an exception to the very objectionable balancing of long and short stones in the dressings of openings, and to the carving in the label over the centre window.

At the breakfast, the president made one of the most eloquent and admirable addresses we ever listened to, full of wisdom. He justly praised the committee for their well directed efforts to obtain this retreat, which members of the society, if overtaken by misfortune, would avail themselves of, not as charity, but as a right, resulting from the previous exercise of prudence and forethought. Mr. Dickenson, who nobly gave the site, Mr. Longman, Mr. Hodgson, the Rev. Mr. Gee, Vicar of Abbot's Langley, Mr. Jordan, and others, also addressed the meeting.\*

#### THE ART-UNION QUESTION.

On Wednesday last, in the House of Commons, Mr. Wye, previous to moving that the House resolve itself into committee on his bill, presented a large number of petitions to its favour, as did Lord Sandon, Mr. Milner Gibson and others. One of the petitions had nearly 3,000 signatures.

The House having resolved itself into committee, Mr. Wye stated that he intended to introduce such amendments as would obviate the objections entertained to this bill.

Mr. Goulburn said he had not abandoned his objections to the measure, which would give an illegitimate advantage to art, whilst the legislature had prohibited gambling in other articles of utility; but as the bill was to be amended, he would postpone the discussion till the bringing up of the report.

The Attorney-General approved of postponing the discussion till the report, as he hoped to remedy most of the objections to the bill, by giving the Queen in council power to suspend the charter if infringed.

Sir R. H. Inglis objected to the bill, because it applied to pictures a principle which, if applied to knives and scissars, would be called gambling; and because the state had put down lotteries, though it used to derive some benefit from the private vices of the people. It was for its advocates to show why what was immoral in everything else ought to be thought moral when applied to the arts.

Mr. Ewart said these unions were general associations for laudable objects, which could not be obtained by individual means, and the best results to art had followed from them. It was easier to apply epithets than give proofs.

Sir George Gray said that the Attorney-General had gone over the bill, and was of opinion that the alterations which had been made were such as to remove all substantial objections to it.

Colonel Sibthorp would support the bill, and when hon. members talked of gambling, he wanted to know whether the House had not sanctioned railroads, which he deemed a species of gambling, and whether the Corn-Exchange and the Stock-Exchange were not scenes of gambling? Indeed, he could not help thinking sometimes that ministerial arrangements were a matter of gambling.

Mr. Home observed, that the results produced by these Art-Unions were different from what was called gambling, but he was glad to find that the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Goulburn) had seen the error of his former ways, for he had been one of the greatest supporters of lotteries. (Laughter.)

Mr. Newdegate hoped the hon. member for the University of Oxford would not oppose the legalization of Art-Unions, which he knew had in Birmingham facilitated exhibitions and the disposal of the works of young artists, to the great benefit of manufactures.

Sir D. L. Evans thought the time was come when they ought to rectify the former neglect of art, and that this bill would assist in that good object.

The various clauses were then agreed to, with certain verbal amendments, and the report was ordered to be brought up that day, and to be taken into consideration on Wednesday next.

We think the bill may be considered safe, still it is desirable that all members who are friendly to it, should attend on Wednesday.

#### THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL INSTITUTE AT YORK.

On Tuesday last, the Institute commenced its operations in the ancient city of York, by holding a general meeting in the Festival Concert Room, whereat the Marquis of Northampton resigned the chair to Earl Fitzwilliam.

Lord Northampton said in the course of his address, "No other county could boast so many remains of antiquity, of great beauty and magnificence, as the county of York. He could not but consider that when this Institute had met in the county of York, under the patronage of the venerable archbishop, and under the presidency of the noble Earl Fitzwilliam, that it was impossible that it could be placed in a position liable to any future hazard. He trusted that it would continue to advance the science of archaeology, so far as it was possible for an Institute to do it, and that at their present meeting the design of the Institute would simply be to promote the object in view, and not to go out of their way to dispute about matters of no consequence to the study of archaeology with other bodies pursuing the same object as themselves. The noble marquis proceeded to enforce the utility of such institutions as this with regard to the preservation of objects of great beauty and antiquity, and spoke in complimentary terms of the kindness and liberality of the Lord Mayor and the corporation of York, and the generous and hospitable spirit in which the members of the Institute had been received.

Other business was transacted, and the members then dispersed in groups to visit the principal buildings in the city.

Papers have been read on the minster by Professor Willis; on the painted glass in York; the Cistercian monasteries of Yorkshire, &c. &c., to which we shall refer hereafter.

**BRITISH MUSEUM.**—On taking a vote in the House of Commons a few days ago, of 45,494*l*. for the new buildings of the British Museum, Mr. Hume asked when the buildings would be finished?—Sir R. Inglis replied, that he had every reason to believe the facade would be finished at Christmas, the carcass of the west wing in the course of the ensuing year, and that the whole of the works would be complete in about three years from the present time.

#### NEW BOOKS.

*On Staking out Railway Curves.* By GEORGE HEALD.

Of the pamphlet appearing under this title on our advertising page, we have little to notice, except that it contains a very simple and practical description of the methods adopted by the author for the setting or staking out of railway curves.

Mr. Heald is evidently well acquainted with his system, or he would not have written so simply upon the matter; nothing is said but what the subject demands. The formula for obtaining offsets to the curve have the advantage of being easily remembered, and the tables will be found exceedingly valuable by all who may be engaged in that description of work.

*A Chart, illustrating the Architecture of Westminster Abbey.* By FRANCIS BUDFORD, Jun. Robinson, 69, Fleet-street.

This is an exceedingly well-drawn and lithographed memento of the Abbey, which may, moreover, have the effect of leading those who examine it, to strive to acquire some knowledge of the changes which occurred in pointed architecture, inasmuch as the Abbey furnishes examples of various epochs, and distinctive character. Those who desire to investigate the Abbey, and obtain some knowledge of its architecture, will find this chart an admirable companion.

#### Correspondence.

##### ARCHITECTURAL PARADOXES.

Ma. Editor.—Give your R, your capital great R, a hearty *bravissimo*! from me. He seems to be quite a Samson Agonistes; is certainly tugging away most formidably at the erroneous opinions and prejudices which beset architecture and the study of it, and which those who teach it encourage either wilfully or ignorantly. Yet while so far his purpose is even alarmingly serious, likely to transform many of our architectural *big-wigs* into so many porcupines, the fellow himself is a wag. Nothing can be more irresistibly droll than his—"That's archaeology, *mon cher*, the science of rubbish."—Nay, it is not only droll, but *am-fully* droll. That dear orthodox old lady *The Ecclesiologist*, and that very respectable old gentleman "*Sylvanus Urban*," will pronounce it profane. To me its sauciness is sauce that fllets my gastric region with delight. Pleasant is it to find Dame Archaeology, who has of late taken upon her to tutor and *school-mistress* architecture, has got such a smart rap on the knuckles from a "*Young Engländer*." "*Rubbings of brasses*,"—what, are they—*rubbish*?—A terrible *rub* that! and from one who must surely be all brass himself. "All sorts of sunny old things!" was there ever such impudence! Quite sure I am that a great many respectable old gentlemen will consider it anything but fun to find the pet objects of their profound pursuits so designated. For my part, I wonder your great R, which doubtless stands for great rogue, did not have a fling at those who would make out architecture to be little more than matter of mathematics, and wholsey the greatest stress of all upon the mystic power of certain proportions, converting æsthetics into arithmetic, and extracting beauty out of numbers, after the fashion of the square root.

Well may your correspondent sign himself "*R*," for many an ah! and oh! too, must his scurviness have extracted from your old-fashioned talkers about architecture. Let him look for *Pug's* visiting him with candle and book, pix and pot of holy water, to exorcise and expel the foul fiend from him. What he must not look for is, any sort of pity from others; certainly not from either the "*Fire*" or the "*Three Orders*" men, much less from that "*Two Orders*" man, the great Sir Robert Smirke; neither must he expect it from any of those who, exclusively devoted to one particular style, condemn all the rest as heresies, or as what is totally unworthy their regard. Positively, he has outlawed himself, and will be considered all the more dangerous, because shrewd and witty. Stupidity may be forgiven because harmless; but sense rendered all the sharper by irresistible pleasantry, is too formidable a weapon not to excite general apprehension.

BUDFORD.

\* An account of Abbot's Langley Church will be found in Vol. III. of *The Architect*, p. 420, and of King's Langley Church, at p. 18 of *The Supplement* in some volume. In Vol. II., p. 66, is a view of the remains of King's Langley priory.